For More Information

Contact your local soil and water conservation district or the Soil and Water Conservation Program at 800-361-4827.

Missouri Department of Natural Resources
Soil and Water Conservation Program

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Missouri Department of Natural Resources

Parks, Soils and Water Sales Tax
WORKING FOR YOU

Conserving Resources for Future Generations

The Missouri Department of Natural Resources' Soil and Water Conservation Program has been entrusted with conserving Missouri's soil and water for future generations. With funding from the parks, soils and water sales tax, the **Department has provided $485 million in incentives to agricultural landowners** to voluntarily install erosion-control and water quality practices. It is estimated that more than **169 million tons of soil have been saved since the start of the sales tax.**

In the 1930s, Americans realized how devastating soil erosion could be, as the Dust Bowl swept across the nation relocating an estimated 300 million tons of soil. Legislation began to take shape to better manage and conserve our nation's soil. Despite these actions, Missouri was still plagued with high erosion rates. **In 1984, Missouri voters passed a one-tenth-of-one-percent parks, soils and water sales tax to fund state parks and soil conservation efforts.**

As a result, **Missouri's erosion rate has dropped more than any other state since 1982**, when its 10.9 tons per acre rate was the second highest in the nation. Currently, an average of 5.3 tons of soil erodes from each acre of Missouri's cultivated cropland each year. While the erosion rate has dropped by more than half, Missouri still has the fifth highest rate in the country.

Missouri's agricultural industry depends on soil. It is the basis of production agriculture. Of Missouri's 44.6 million acres of land, 26.3 million acres are considered agricultural. Erosion can cause problems when water washes away the productive topsoil, leading to decreased productivity of our land, affecting Missouri's food supply and its economy.

When soil erodes it can wash into streams, rivers and lakes. **Sediment is the leading cause of water pollution in Missouri.** Soil not only decreases water clarity, it carries chemicals and nutrients into Missouri's waterways. As sediment is deposited, it increases the chance of flooding, and it can also lead to the destruction of valuable aquatic habitat, such as fish spawning areas. Chemicals entering water supplies can add millions of dollars each year to water treatment costs.

During the last sales tax renewal in 2006, Missouri citizens voiced their concerns about conserving these water resources. With legislative changes in 2009, **water quality practices are now available statewide to agricultural landowners** in Missouri in addition to the erosion-control practices that have been in place for years.

According to a recent study, public and private investments in soil and water conservation programs benefit Missourians:

- Business sales of more than $500 million;
- The creation of over 1,000 jobs each year;
- Nearly $80 million in labor income; and
- More than $110 million in property-type income.